

GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • MAY 2020

LETTER FROM OUR TOWN COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Highland community comes together as restrictions continue in Lake County

As we begin May, the Town of Highland — like every other city and town in Indiana — has been given direction by Gov. Eric Holcomb on how to proceed to ease the restrictions we have been living under for the last six weeks.

Because Lake, Marion and Cass counties experienced a spike in COVID-19 cases in late April, the state has issued a timeline for us that is a week behind the other 89 counties.

We are not out of the woods on this virus. Highland began May with nearly 50 reported cases, a smaller number than those reported in most of our surrounding communities, but of concern to local and state health authorities, nonetheless.

Over the next week, the leadership team that has been making decisions on how best to keep residents safe will be focusing daily briefings on the best — and safest way — to reopen our playgrounds, Lincoln Community Center and the rest of Town of Highland buildings. We will discuss additional safeguards that will be in place as we reopen.

We appreciate everyone who has been a good neighbor —



[INSIDE] The Blessing Box at the First Presbyterian Church in Highland is just one of the many ways our community is helping others. Read more on page 3.

from Highland resident Dolores Wantroba who's making masks to our churches and families distributing food to those in need.

Thank you for keeping our community and families happy, healthy and safe.

MARK SCHOCKE
Town Council President

CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL REPORT

[MAY UPDATE]

Gov. Eric Holcomb's Back On Track Indiana plan to safely open the economy will be rolled out in stages:

MAY 8: Indoor church services resume. Those 65 and older and those at elevated risk will be asked to stay home.

MAY 11: Lake County restaurants, retailers and other commercial businesses can reopen. Essential travel restrictions will be lifted, and social gatherings of up to 25 people will be permitted following the CDC's social distancing guidelines.

Hoosiers 65 and over and those with high-risk health conditions should remain at home.

MAY 18: Barber shops, hair/nail salons, spas and other personal services can reopen.

WHAT'S NEXT?

If health indicators remain positive, the state will move to stage 3. To learn more about the different stages and dates, visit [BackOnTrack.in.gov](https://www.backontrack.in.gov).

[2020 CENSUS]

Census 2020 deadlines have been extended amid the Covid-19 crisis. Residents have until October 31 to submit information. If you do not respond, census workers will begin visiting Highland households in August. For those who do not want an in-person visit this summer or fall, it is important to respond by phone, mail or online as soon as possible. Questions? Email Highland's Complete Count Committee at lryskamp@highland.in.gov.



WARD 1

BERNIE ZEMEN
bzemen@comcast.net
(219) 781-1056



WARD 2

MARK HERAK
mherak@highland.in.gov
(219) 838-0126



WARD 3

MARK SCHOCKE
mschocke@highland.in.gov
(219) 207-2075



WARD 4

TOM BLACK
tblack@highland.in.gov
(219) 301.2077



WARD 5

ROGER SHEEMAN
rsheeman@highland.in.gov
(630) 673-3363



CLERK-TREASURER

MICHAEL GRIFFIN
mgriffin@highland.in.gov
(219) 838-1080

NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:
gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com

The Gazebo Express is produced by:
The Idea Factory • (219) 779-9041
www.theideafactory.us.com

Printed by Lithographic Communications
9701 Indiana Parkway, Munster, IN 46321

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN TOWN GOVERNMENT

Matching grant helps Highland tackle \$2 million in road improvements

Highland is approved for \$2 million in local road projects this summer. The best news: half of the money — \$1 million — is coming from the state's Community Crossings Matching Grant program.

Started in 2016 to assist cities, towns and even counties tackle their lengthy to-do lists by providing a dollar-for-dollar match, Public Works Director John Bach said the project has been a boon for Highland.

"The Town Council saw the value in this program and set aside funds to participate," Bach said. "Through nearly \$500,000 in local match in 2016 and again in 2017 and nearly \$900,000 in 2019, we have been able to see real progress in road projects.

"This year's investment of \$1 million, which translates into \$2 million in projects, means 31 local streets will get the improvements they need.

"We are already looking at how much Highland will be able to afford as a match for next year." Bach said.

[ROADWORK PROJECTS]

- Main Street at Kennedy Avenue
- Prairie Ave: Main to Ramblewood
- Prairie Ave: Kenilworth to Ridge
- 5th Street: Ridge to Duluth
- Duluth Avenue: 5th to Parrish
- Duluth Court: Duluth to dead end
- 5th Street: 100th to 45th
- Lakeside Drive: 5th to Delaware
- Lakeside Drive: Delaware to 5th
- Southmoor: Azalea Hart
- Bluebird: Town limit to Woodward
- Martha: Town limit to Idlewild
- Parrish Avenue: LaPorte to Strong
- Parrish Court: Parrish to dead end
- Grand Blvd: Sycamore to Gordon
- Eder Ave: Gordon to Kennedy
- Strong: Gordon to Kennedy
- Delaware: 97th to 45th
- 97th Place: 5th to Delaware
- 98th-99th: 5th to dead end
- Erie: 45th to 41st
- 43rd Street: Kennedy to 5th
- Wirth Road: Grace to Liable
- Lincoln Avenue: 5th to Carolina
- Clough: Kleinman to Cline
- O'Day: 41st Street to 41st Place
- 42nd Street: O'Day to Grace

Town to draft 5-year capital improvement plan

While the snow was still flying, the Town Council began the process of creating a 5-year capital plan as a tool for maximizing every dollar.

It was Councilman Roger Sheeman who broached the idea with the town council at the same time Parks and Recreation began working on a multi-year plan of its own.

Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin said the five-year window provides a snapshot of purchases that will be necessary along with plans on how to fund them.

"This is something I've long advocated for," Griffin said. "Not only is it considered a best practice, looking five years out for capital projects will help optimize our resources."

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND TOWN



Photo provided

[LITTLE FOOD PANTRY]

The Peterson's Little Free Library at the bike path and 41st Street has become a hub of activity — not for those looking for a great read — but for folks needing a little extra help with food as well as those helping with donations. Heather Peterson said it's going to stay that way until the danger of the pandemic passes. "We were cleaning the books on a regular basis but it just wasn't enough," she said. "The food is a perfect use for the library at a time when it is most needed."

[BLESSING BOX]

Damaged by a spring storm, the Blessing Box at First Presbyterian Church at Main Square is back up and providing nutrition for those who need it. The church is also providing drive-up free lunches on Delaware between noon and 1 p.m. on Saturdays and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Program Coordinator Krissy LaFlech said the church has been blessed with donations that will keep the Blessing Box stocked and lunches packed at least through June.

[VIRTUAL EXERCISE CLASSES]

Regulars at Lincoln Community Center fitness classes may be staying home, but plan to emerge from the quarantine even more fit than before, thanks to instructor Louise Boyd. In all, Boyd leads as many as eight classes per week from her very own private YouTube Channel. They include chair yoga and fitness, senior dance and aerobics along with adult aerobics. Renew Active and SilverSneakers members can tap into the classes for free. Others can sign up for pay-as-you-go through Lincoln Community Center.

INFO: Are you Renew Active or SilverSneakers eligible, but not a Lincoln Center member? Call (219) 838-0114 to set up a membership over the phone.



Coloring Contest 1st Place Winner: Caleb, Age 7

[PARKS & REC FACEBOOK CONTESTS]

From lip sync to coloring contests and beyond, Parks and Recreation is working to make sheltering in place more fun. The activities, which began in March and will continue throughout the duration of the state's stay-at-home orders, are challenging, fun and competitive, just the ticket when it comes to brightening snowy, and now wet, spring days. "We will be coming up with new contests — at least one a week — as long as Lincoln Center remains closed," Recreation Director Dave Byers said. "We know these are challenging times for kids and we want to make sure they aren't bored. We are just as eager to have things open and moving again."

INFO: Join us on Facebook @highlandparks

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR HIGHLAND FAMILIES

[FOOD BANK OF NORTHWEST INDIANA]



Photo provided | Food Bank of Northwest Indiana

[DRIVE-THROUGH MOBILE MARKETS]

The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana Mobile Market is available to all residents in need of food assistance. Each market provides free grains, fruits, vegetables and protein to individuals and families. The market travels to a different community each week. The next Highland market is from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 27 at Warren Elementary School, 2901 100th Street.

INFO: Visit foodbanknwi.org for more dates/locations.

[SENIOR FOOD BOX PROGRAM]

With our community in the grips of COVID-19, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana is adjusting its operations to meet the increased needs of today. The Senior Food Box Program – with no income requirements – delivers food twice a month to senior citizens at highest risk, shut in, lack transportation or don't qualify for any type of government assistance.

INFO: Call (219) 980-1777 to register.

[ST. JAMES FOOD PANTRY]

St. James the Less Catholic Church distributes food from 9 to 11 a.m. every Friday at 9640 Kennedy Ave. As long as pandemic precautions remain in effect, the distribution is a drive-through operation. Proof of Highland residency is required.

[NORTH TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE]

North Township is assisting residents who need help paying their mortgage, rent, utilities and burials during the pandemic. Case managers are conducting assistance interview by phone. Before calling, you will need a few documents handy, including:

- Food Stamps/AFDC Program Verification
- Receipts or landlord statement that prove residency and its associated costs
- Last four pay stubs, strike verification, proof of child support, unemployment card, Social Security check or TANF/AFDC letter
- Proof of family size, medical expenses, asset list
- Last month's expense sheet with credit cards, utilities, loans and cable listed.

INFO: Highland residents should call (219) 932-2530.

[CATHOLIC CHARITIES FOOD PANTRY]

North Township and the local Catholic Charities Food Pantry are working to provide food deliveries to seniors and the disabled community. Deliveries are before 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

INFO: Call (219) 306-1344 for assistance.

[MEALS ON WHEELS]

Meals on Wheels of Northwest Indiana continues to make every effort to ensure clients are taken care of during this pandemic and does not anticipate interruption to its current home delivered meals.

INFO: Call (219) 756-3663 or visit mownwi.org.